under the administrative control of Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology, not under CSIR. The centre was set up with the purpose to act as the apex coordination Centre for brain research, to consolidate, network and undertake basic research of high caliber in neuroscience and establish linkages with national and international organizations involved in neuroscience research.

(c) A total grant of Rs. 4760.00 lakhs was provided to NBRC during the last three years (Rs. 1100 lakh during the financial year 2002-03; Rs. 1560 lakh during the financial year 2003-04, Rs.2100 lakh during the financial year 2004-05).

(d) NBRC has initiated several research programmes in neuroscience, which include activities in the area of stem cell biology, molecular and cellular neuroscience, theoretical neurobiology, systems neuroscience, cognitive neuroscience, neurovirology and neuroinformatics. The Centre was granted the status of deemed university in May 2002 and is continuing with its M.Sc. and Ph.D. programmes for Research Fellows.

(e) and (f) The performance of the centre was reviewed during July, 2004, by a high level committee under the chairmanship of Prof. D. Balasubramanian, Director, L.V. Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad as per recommendation of Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance. The committee observed that the Centre has concentrated a triad of activities—research, human resource development and hub of network in the broad field of neuroscience and considered the overall performance as very good.

Agreement with Ireland

1109. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian National Science Academy and the Science Foundation of Ireland have signed an agreement during the recent visit of the Prime Minister of Ireland; and

(b) if so, the salient features of the agreement?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) Yes Sir, it is a fact that the Indian National Science Academy

and the Science Foundation Ireland signed an Agreement on scientific cooperation on 19th January 2006 during the recent visit of the Prime Minister of Ireland.

(b) The Agreement will promote bilateral cooperation between India and Ireland in world-class scientific research in the area of bio-sciences and bio-engineering and information and communication technologies. This will also encourage direct cooperation between scientists for the solution of scientific problems of common interest through exchange of scientific information and exchange of scientists and joint research proposals/projects, where appropriate, under the purview of the Agreement signed.

Research in Nanotechnology

1110. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Nanotechnology has far reaching impact on electronics and computing, data storage, materials and manufacturing, energy, environment, healthcare, medicine and transportation;

(b) whether Government propose to conduct any research and training programme in Nanotechnology and if so, what are the target areas of research; and

(c) whether Government propose to formulate any policy guideline in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government is fully aware of the impact and implications of Nanoscience and Nanotechnology. Various Ministries/Departments such as Department of Science and Technology (DST), Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO), Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Department of Biotechnology (DBT) have been supporting research projects and some facilities in Nanoscience and Technology. DST has launched a national programme titled 'Nano Science and Technology Initiative (NSTI)' in October 2001. The programme focuses at overall research and development in nanoscience and technology with vigour so that India can become a significant player in the area and contribute to the development of new